

Appl. No. : 09/786,847
Filed : March 9, 2001

REMARKS

Claims 2-23 are pending in this application. Claim 1 has been cancelled. Claims 2-6, 8, and 11-13 have been amended. New claims 14-23 have been added.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 4 and 8 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 4 and 8 have been rewritten in independent form. The remaining claims depend from Claim 4 or 8 or an intervening claim. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection be withdrawn.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-2, 5-7, and 9-12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over U.S. 6,612,723 to Futhey et al. in view of U.S. 6,120,881 to Smith et al. Although Applicants do not agree with the propriety of the rejection, Claim 1 has been canceled and claims 5-7 and 9-12 have been amended to depend from Claim 4 or an intervening claim, solely to facilitate issuance of the claims indicated to be allowable. Applicants reserve the ability to pursue the canceled claim, or similar claims, in one or more continuing patent applications. The rejection is therefore moot.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 3 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over U.S. 6,612,723 to Futhey et al. in view of U.S. 6,120,881 to Smith et al. and in further view of U.S. 5,946,134 to Benson et al. Although Applicants do not agree with the propriety of the rejection, Claim 3 has been amended to depend from Claim 4, solely to facilitate issuance of the claims indicated to be allowable. Applicants reserve the ability to pursue the canceled claim, or similar claims, in one or more continuing patent applications. The rejection is therefore moot.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any remaining

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concerns which might prevent the prompt allowance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: June 15, 2004

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